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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001575

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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR THE MARCH 31-APRIL 1 VISIT OF
D/USDP RYAN HENRY TO TURKEY

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Your visit comes at a time when Turkey is trying to balance its role as regional good neighbor with its responsibilities as a NATO member and EU candidate. The Government of Turkey (GOT) counsels engagement over isolation in dealing with countries like Iran and has presented itself as a conduit for the international community. Turkey's increasingly strong public statements on Iran's nuclear program reflect that stance. The Government of Turkey (GOT) is increasingly engaging the Iraqi leadership over issues of mutual interest, maintains a leadership role in ISAF in Afghanistan and provides critical logistical support for Coalition efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Your visit comes on the heels of the Mar. 22-24 visits by a Senate Armed Services delegation and CJCS Gen Pace, and will reinforce our efforts to intensify dialogue with both civilian and military authorities. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Since Dec. 2005, CIA Director Goss, FBI Director Mueller, EUCOM Deputy Commander GEN Wald, USAFE Commander Gen Hobbins, USAFE Deputy Commander LTG Bishop, Marine Corps Commandant Gen Hagee, CJCS Gen Pace and a Senate Armed Services Committee delegation led by Senator John Warner have visited Ankara. This high-level engagement has contributed significantly to positive improvement in the bilateral relationship since a late 2004-early 2005 through created by Coalition operations in Iraq. Your visit will add to the positive message and your message on the future direction of the US military will be welcome.

IRAN

¶3. (C) Turkey fears that an escalation of tensions with Iran could bring another conflict to the neighborhood. On March 11, during a week-end retreat by ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) members, Deputy PM and FM Abdullah Gul reportedly said that, while Turkey sought to continue dialogue with Tehran, it may have to "close the door on Iran" if that government proves unable to fulfill its international obligations. In recent meetings with US Amb. to the IAEA Greg Schulte and NEA DAS Gordon Gray, however, the GOT has insisted that engagement, not isolation, is the only option and expressed concern about possible sanctions. Turkish officials do not dispute that Iran's nuclear development program is for non-peaceful uses but they do not all believe Iran is a threat to Turkey. The military has, however, convinced the government on the need for a ballistic air

defense system and a tender will be issued in the coming months.

PARTNER IN IRAQ

¶4. (C) Over 90% of Turks opposed the Iraq war and opposition remains high. Despite this, Turkey is contributing positively to ensure that Iraq is a success story. It provides significant logistical support for the coalition effort in Iraq. The Incirlik cargo hub has facilitated the movement of over 129 million pounds of equipment for coalition troops since its initiation in May 2005. The Incirlik air refueling hub has conducted 2800 sorties delivering 192 million pounds of fuel in support of OIF and OEF since 2003. Twenty-five percent of sustainment fuel for the coalition crosses through the Habur Gate connecting Turkey and Iraq as does two-thirds of humanitarian fuel for the Iraqi people. Habur is a bottleneck that is being upgraded; talks on opening additional border crossings have not progressed.

¶5. (C) Turkey is also increasingly engaging the Iraqi authorities directly. In addition to its Embassy in Baghdad, Turkey will open a consulate in Mosul this year. Turkey's Special Envoy for Iraq, Amb. Celikkol, visited Baghdad Feb. 23-25 and met with a wide array of Iraqi political figures, including Kurdish leaders with whom Turkey has tense relations. Iraqi PM Ja'aferi visited Ankara immediately thereafter. The GOT took the initiative to host tribal leaders from Talafar to discuss a peaceful resolution of their differences. Turkey also provided a neutral forum for Iraqi ethnic leaders to meet with Amb. Khalilzad to encourage their participation in the Dec. 2005 elections. Turkey remains concerned about the PKK presence in northern Iraq and Kurdish expansion in oil-rich Kirkuk but recognizes that a stable, democratic Iraq is key to resolving these issues.

BUT THE PKK STILL A PROBLEM

¶6. (C) Attacks attributed to the PKK Kurdistan Workers' Party continue against Turkish soldiers and Jandarma in Turkey's southeast, in what the GOT presumes are cross-border operations emanating from Iraq. The media is predicting a spring escalation of PKK attacks in Turkish cities. Terrorist incidents in Istanbul, Van and elsewhere in February and March may have been the start of this. TLFC Commander GEN Buyukanit has walked back his comments in Washington during December about a Turkish military "spring cleaning" operation against the PKK in northern Iraq, and all judge such action unlikely absent large-scale PKK action in Turkey's cities.

SUPPORTING NATO IN AFGHANISTAN

¶7. (U) Turkey has contributed significantly to NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, successfully commanding ISAF II in 2003 and ISAF VII in 2005. It is currently planning for a joint command of the Central Region in Kabul with France and Italy beginning in summer 2006 and will simultaneously open a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in neighboring Wardak Province. Following PM Erdogan's spring 2005 visit to Afghanistan the government increased its bilateral aid to \$100M, including for the reconstruction of schools, and is evaluating the provision of counter-narcotics training.

DEFENSE INDUSTRY COOPERATION ON THE DECLINE

¶8. (SBU) Historically the strongest area of the relationship, bilateral defense industry cooperation is deteriorating. In the last five years, three US firms -- General Dynamics, Bell Textron and General Atomics Aviation - have closed their offices in Turkey. Boeing was the last firm to win a direct sale when Turkey awarded it a contract for an Airborne Early

Warning and Control (AEW&C) system in 2002. Protracted and contentious negotiations on that contract were not completed until fall 2005 and the first aircraft landed in Turkey on Mar. 14, 2006. Boeing and Bell Textron decided not to participate in an attack helicopter tender due to onerous terms and conditions that placed extensive liability on the contractor and required upfront contractor guarantees of technology transfer rights and licenses. For the same reasons, Sikorsky -- which had considered establishing its International Blackhawk production facility in Turkey if it won a tender for 52 utility helicopters for the Turkish Armed Forces and Forestry Service -- may choose not to bid on that tender. Raytheon may also opt against participation in a tender for a propeller airplane trainer. Unless SSM decides that it is in Turkey's interest to ensure US participation in tenders by adjusting the T&Cs -- or the military can persuade the government to change course, the exodus of US firms from Turkey will likely continue.

STRONG INTEREST IN QDR

¶9. (C) Turkey has been closely following the US Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) process to determine if there is anything the military can apply to its own slow-moving modernization process and to monitor areas of particular concern, including:

- (SBU) Black Sea: Turkey is cautious about any multilateral cooperation on Black Sea maritime security outside the context of the BLACKSEAFOR and Operation BLACK SEA HARMONY (OBSH) initiatives they originated. The Turks argue that an active NATO role would alienate Russia in an area where its cooperation is needed. They closely monitor compliance with the Montreux Convention and consider that treaty vital to maintaining a strategic balance in the Black Sea. However, the GOT has agreed to a bilateral Black Sea engagement opportunity planned for April 14-17 with USS PORTER. We have not yet received a formal response to our request for a Turkish CFE entitlement contribution to support a US troop presence in Romania and Bulgaria.

- (SBU) Missile Defense (MD): Turkey supports NATO's Missile Defense strategy and has been confused by the concurrent bilateral strategy we are pursuing. The military is reluctant to support any effort which might dilute or conflict with a NATO-led program. As a result, progress on a sensor placement study agreed to in 2004 has been slow. An amendment to our bilateral MOU on MD cooperation was just finalized and an MDA team will visit in April to continue work on that project.

- (SBU) Basing: The media periodically speculates that the US intends to expand our presence at Incirlik Air Base and has designs on additional bases in Turkey from which to launch an attack against one of its neighbors. The early 2005 influx of US NATO personnel to Izmir with the opening of NATO's CC Air Izmir caused a flurry of press reports speculating that the US was building a base in that port. The planned visit of the USS PORTER to the Black Sea port of Samsun in conjunction with a Black Sea exercise in April will likely add fuel to this fire.

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